

Kenneth Thomas, likewise a private soldier, retired as a major.



10th Cavalry Yearbook, 1941

Sergeant Kenneth L. Thomas



Leroy Green when he retired from Temple University

I have here a picture of a former member of the 10th Cavalry in the person of Leroy Green—a member of Troop B during the time that Mr. Johnson [Brown] was a member of the 10th Cavalry. He was a private soldier . . . however, this article . . . “Leroy Green Taking Retirement From Temple University” [says that] he had been an instructor at Temple University, which is a great progress. Let’s see, what does it state?

His “first retirement” was in 1956 after serving 20 years in the U.S. Army where he rose from the rank of private to captain. He had enlisted in 1935 in the “horse cavalry” at Fort Leavenworth in his native Kansas.

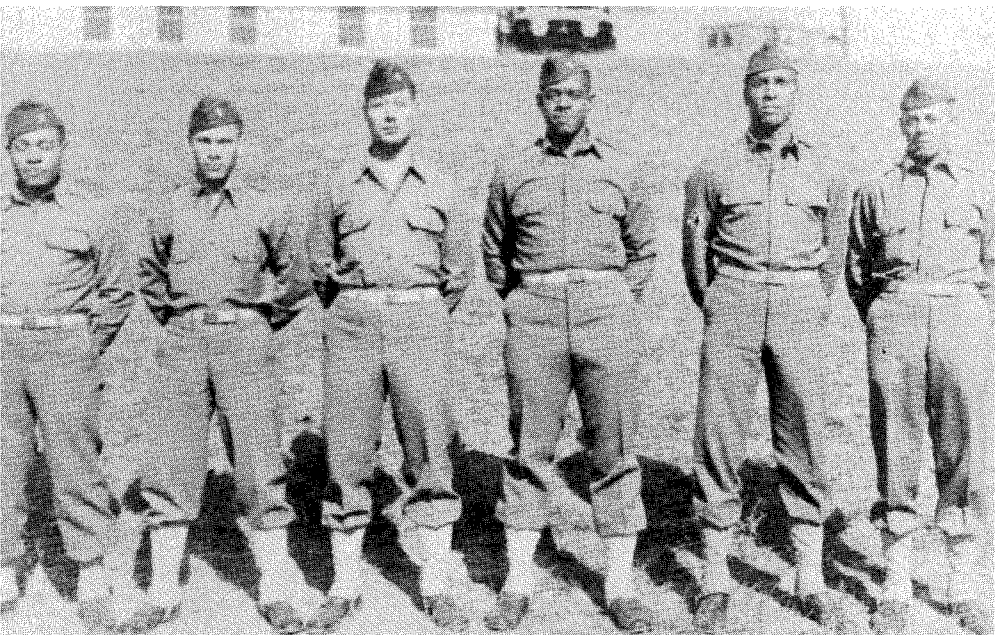
Here, I have a picture of a former 10th cavalryman in the person of my brother. Here, he is as a member of a tank destroyer unit as a first lieutenant. I think he got out as a captain; however, he became a lawyer and a very famous lawyer. His area of work was that in civil rights. They called him Mr. Civil Rights. [reading] "Hollowell Champions Civil Rights in Georgia." He was a member of the law firm that put the first black student in Georgia University [University of Georgia?]. He was also the regional director of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the Southern District, which included several [Southern] states. He was commissioned [as an officer] . . . his charge was confirmed by Theodore Roosevelt Jr. Here's a picture at his confirmation.

This is an interesting article. It's *The Kansas City Star*, Monday, January 16, 1989. It's an article in regard to Martin Luther King Jr. The picture here is captioned, "John F. Kennedy phone call to Coretta King contributed to his narrow victory for president in 1969 [1960]." The article says:

Donald Hollowell, King's chief attorney presented character addresses and a host of arguments but [Judge] Mitchell banged the gavel, revoked King's probation, and ordered him to serve four months at hard labor on a road gang beginning immediately.

Captain Knapp: So your brother was Dr. King's attorney.

The officers of Headquarters Company, 795th Tank Destroyer Battalion, at Camp Custer, Michigan, in early 1943. Lieutenant Donald Hollowell is fourth from the left.



Harry H. Hollowell collection

Mr. Hollowell: On a number of occasions, he got him out of jail. Let's see here—

In Atlanta, Donald Hollowell dispelled a far more intense gloom that morning when he trumpeted the news that Judge Mitchell had changed his mind and signed an order to release King on \$2,000.00 bond.

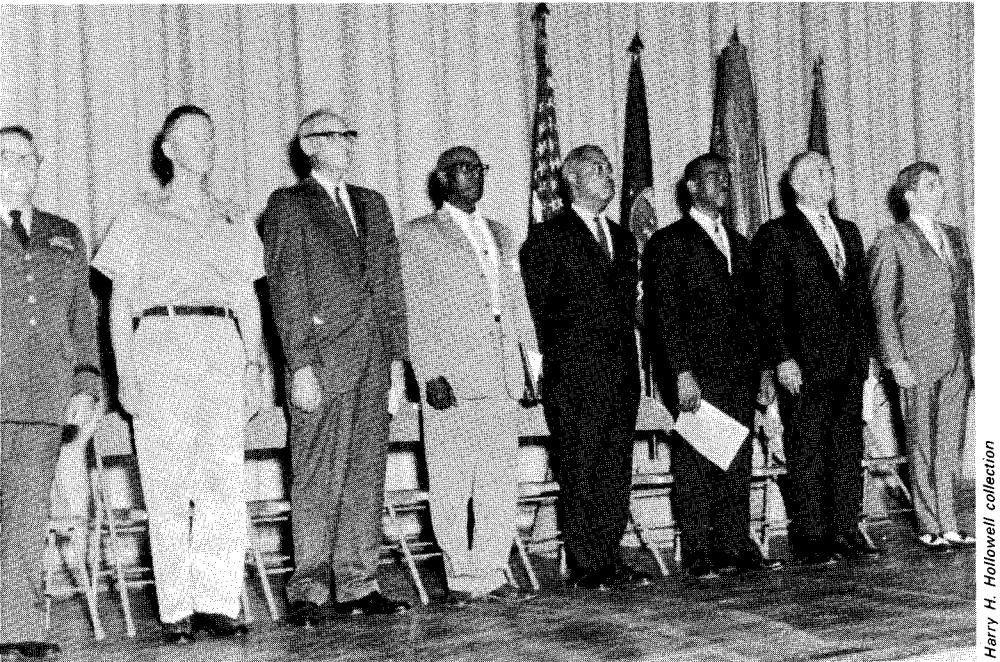
In my opinion, Don has contributed admirably to our way of life of today. However, he got his start here in Troop A of the 10th Cavalry, having left the regiment in 1938, went to school at Lane College, and pursued a legal career. I'm very proud of his contributions.

At the first 10th Cavalry reunion here in 1966, Hollowell was one of the principal speakers along with Governor Avery, who was governor of the state of Kansas. And in this picture is also a picture of Senator Reilly, the commandant . . . [reading] "Senator Reilly, Governor Avery, Attorney Hollowell, Adolph Holmes, Urban League director, was a member of Troop B of the 10th Cavalry." He became an important person in the National Urban League; he became its director. He was on the podium, on the stage here at the current Fort Leavenworth theater at this 10th Cavalry reunion.

Donald L. Hollowell receives an award at the Kappa Alpha Psi testimonial banquet in Atlanta, Georgia, on 22 February 1969. From left to right are Reverend Ralph David Abernathy, Mr. Hollowell, Rheubin M. Taylor, Mrs. Hollowell, and Bishop P. Randolph Shy

Harry H. Hollowell collection





On the podium at the 10th Cavalry reunion in 1966 are from left to right Post Chaplain C. A. Goss; Brigadier General Robert C. Taber, assistant commandant of USACGSC; Leavenworth Mayor Thomas D. Beal; Sergeant Henry D. Williams, president of the Retired Men's Club; Adolph Holmes, director of the Urban League; Attorney Donald L. Hollowell; Kansas Governor William H. Avery; and Kansas State Senator Edward F. Reilly

The post commander, or the deputy, I think, was Brigadier General Taber, Fort Leavenworth acting commandant at that time. Sergeant Henry D. Williams was president of the Retired Men's Club, which was the sponsor of the 10th Cavalry reunion.

But the 10th has made a lot of wonderful contributions. The motto of the 10th was Ready and Forward. Many personages of the 10th have made their records here in whatever capacity they served as members of the 10th Cavalry and have gone on to maintain a continuity . . . made their contribution in today's life, made their contributions as then, which brings us up to today.

I'm proud to have been a member of the 10th Cavalry along with these members here. Oh, that's right, I served here from 1960 to 1963 as the post bandleader. That's a far cry from enlisting as a soldier . . . as a private in 1936. When I came in, the

post bandleader's name was Mr. Hebert, I believe, and I had the ambition of one day coming or being a bandleader. I was fortunate enough to make bandleader in '42 and, eventually, come here as the post bandleader [1960—63].

I still live here in Leavenworth, proud of the community, proud of the comments and the remarks which these men have made, and I hope life continues well. Oh yes, there's a young fellow here who was seven or eight years old when I came in. His dad's name was Louis B. Johnson. Seven or eight years old, but the fellow now is a brigadier general, and I wouldn't



Brigadier General Julius Johnson, son of Louis B. Johnson

doubt but what he now wears two stars rather than one. I can't find the article here, but it's a credit because the old 9th and 10th Cavalry did its duty to lay the groundwork for many officers now who go to this school [USACGSC], which shows that the country will never be at its best until it has all of the groups, all of the ethnic groups, of the nation making their contribution to the American way of life.

The article that I was speaking about: "General Johnson, Black History Month Speaker," *The Leavenworth Times*, the date is February 16, 1989. He goes on to make a remark; I hope to be able to find it, in which one item that he remembered as a youngster was seeing me go to church in uniform. Here it is, I think. See, if I had my good eyes—

Longtime Leavenworth resident Louis B. Johnson. Gladys Johnson raised two sons. The prize photo on Johnson's wall shows his father dressed in his 10th Cavalry uniform standing under the flag of Troop A. . . . Several mentioned their family's devotion to Bethel AME Church. Johnson said the foundation of his upbringing was the church. The Leavenworth High School graduate of 1958 recalls Sunday services on the morning Harry H. Hollowell would play the piano for the service.

I think he made the comment at this address. One of his most memorable memories was seeing me go to church in uniform and participate in the religious service of the old Bethel AME Church.

I do not want to monopolize this period, but it's a wonderful reflection. I appreciate the work that the Department of the Army and that Captain Knapp is doing, and I have great credit for the project which is now underfoot to commemorate the contributions of members of the minority—the black troops. [With] everybody working together, we can't help but be successful.

Captain Knapp: It's always nice, Mr. Hollowell, that people like you keep up with all these folks and where they are and where they were and when they served. It's good that . . . now Sergeant Robinson, you were going to say something about. . . .

Sergeant Robinson: I was just going to make a comment about . . . he was speaking about not wanting to monopolize the whole thing, but I was enjoying his monopolizing.

Captain Knapp: You knew a lot of those folks he was talking about, all of you did.

Sergeant Robinson: Yes, I knew all of them. Yes, that's why

I said I was enjoying it so well because everything he said that way was true.

Captain Knapp: This brings back a lot of memories for you.

Sergeant Robinson: Yes, it does.

Captain Knapp: You were in the stables for a short time when you first joined the 10th, but you got another job in the Book Department. Tell us about that.

Sergeant Robinson: Yes, I was assigned to the polo stables. Now, it's called . . . let me see, what is the polo stable called now?

Captain Knapp: Flint Gym, Flint Hall.

Sergeant Robinson: Yes, Flint Hall. That was the polo stables at that time.

Captain Knapp: It was a service club for a while too, I think.

Sergeant Robinson: Yes, it was. It was a service club in 1940. I believe that's when the 10th Cavalry, with their own labor, made it into a service club. But the time when I was there, it was the polo stables and we had, as Sergeant Brown pointed out, we had four horses apiece to take care of. I worked there for a little while. Finally, one day I was summoned to come over to the orderly room and said that the commanding officer wanted to see me. Well, that was Captain Willey, I believe. Captain Willey was his name. I said to myself, "What have I done? What does he want to see me about?"

Captain Knapp: You thought you were in trouble.

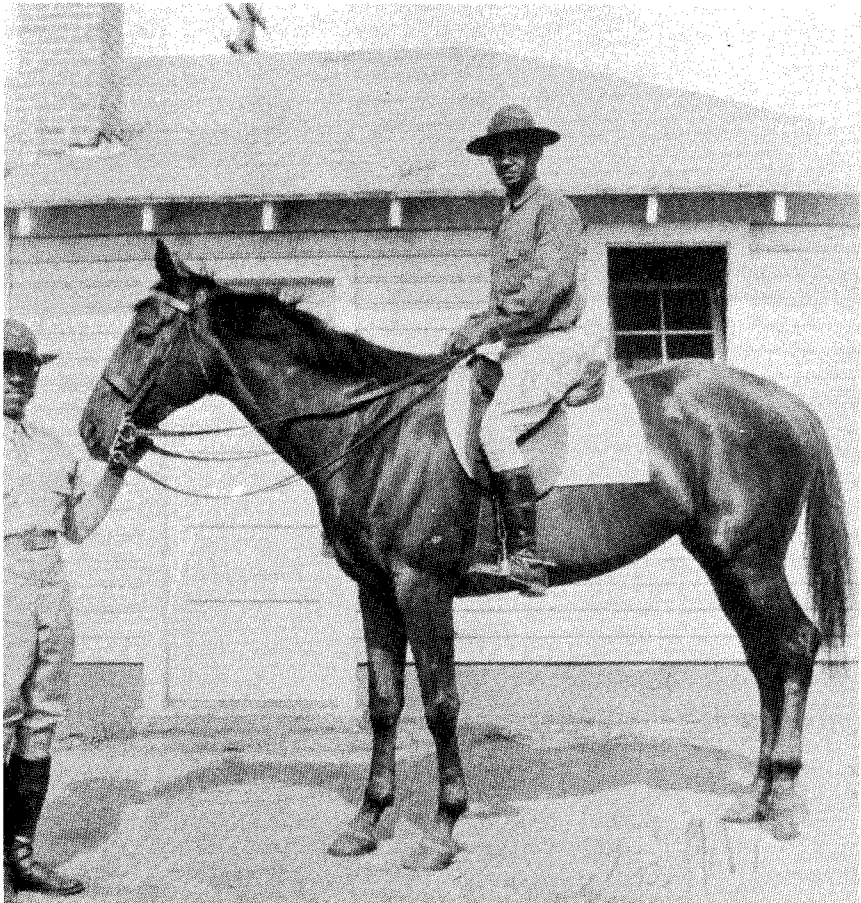
Sergeant Robinson: Yes . . . no, I didn't think I was in any trouble, but what could he want to see me about? I went in to the first sergeant who said, "Captain Willey wants to see you." I said, "What about?" He said, "I don't know." Of course, I think he knew. Anyway, I walked in and saluted Captain Willey, and he said, "Private Robinson, I've got an assignment for you."

I said, "An assignment?" He said, "Yes." He said, "Mister Williams, the chief warrant officer at the Book Department, sent down here to fill a vacancy with an honest person to work at the Book Department as a clerk." I said, "Captain, I have no experience as a . . . no clerical experiences. I have nothing like that."

The man up there was a retired black man who had retired as a first lieutenant. "Sergeant Bly," they called him. His nickname, they called him "Captain Bly." He was in charge of the

Book Department under Mr. Williams. He was in the shipping department. He said Mr. Williams wanted an honest person up there.

I said, "I don't know how he found out, but I'm honest as far as that's concerned." He said, "Are you willing . . . do you want to go?" I said, "Yes sir, I don't mind." So, they sent me up there to fill this vacancy. When I walked into the shipping room, Cap [Bly] recognized me because, at one time, when I lived on Dakota [Street], he lived on Kiowa [Street]. He knew me by my being a friend to his son. He knew of me, but we didn't actually know one another. When he saw me, he said, "I recognize you. I've seen you in the neighborhood."



Harry H. Hollowell collection

Corporal Albert Bly with Harry Hollowell holding the horse's reins

I said, "Yes, but Sergeant Bly, they sent you the wrong man." I looked at all the typewriters and all the things that were to be done that way, and I said, "They sent you the wrong man. I know nothing about any of this in here. I don't know how to do any of this." He said, "Well, you may not know but are you willing to learn?" "Yes sir, I'm always out to learn," I said; "I'm willing to learn, sure." He said, "I'll teach you."

Mr. Hollowell: Ready and forward.

Sergeant Robinson: Yes, ready and forward.

In the meantime, there was another fellow there who was from B Troop. He was working there as a clerk, LaFlore. Danny Miles was working there as a truckdriver. LaFlore was the chief of the thing. He was an expert with all of it, you know. He said, "Rob, I'll teach you."

But it just looked like I couldn't comprehend. My schooling itself was limited. I hadn't finished high school. Nothing like that. How was I going to do this? This is too much. But, as I said then, my stepfather always taught me that if you apply yourself you can do anything that anybody else can do. So, that came back to me. In the meantime, he said, "Well, we'll start you out."

They were showing me what my duties were to be. He first started out, after I was there for a little while, he taught me on the typewriter. LaFlore, the chief man there, had me to make out a bill of lading for the shipment that was to go out. We shipped maps all over. You name it, we'd ship it all over the country. It was a hunt and peck, hunt and peck, and it was wrong when I got the bill of lading made out for the shipment. I put it on Captain Bly's desk and he said, "Well, that's wrong Rob. Try it again." He was a very patient man.

I'd go and type it again, and finally, I put it on his desk, and he said, "Put it on there and let it go." Well, that aroused my ego, man. I was ready to do anything.

Captain Knapp: You got it right!

Sergeant Robinson: Yeah, I got it right. Well, then I'm on my way now. In the meantime, I was there for about a month, and I was doing pretty good. If the people there were that interested in me improving myself, why not help myself? So, I sent off to Chicago, and I bought myself a typewriter. After they sent it, my parents lived here in Leavenworth at the time, and I... after they sent this typewriter, I would go up there

and I would type . . . the table and everything they had. They sent me everything, the touch system. I'd go up there, and I would type, type, type until two in the morning trying to improve my typing.

All of this, unbeknownst to the people whom I was working with. LaFlore, I didn't tell him. I didn't tell Captain Bly or nobody else. Nobody knew it but my mother and my dad because I would be up there so late and the wastepaper basket was just loaded when I'd make so many mistakes that way. But I said that's the only way I could do it, just applying myself. That word kept going to me all the time—apply yourself. I kept doing that.

They had noticed, after a certain length of time, that when I'd make out a bill of lading the way that I was, you know, doing pretty good without errors. I was slow but no errors in it. I had practiced. I had took some of the forms that we'd make out the bill of lading and carbon copies.

Captain Knapp: Practiced on the real forms.

Sergeant Robinson: Practiced on the real thing. When it came my time to make out a bill of lading, I put it on his desk, and he said, "Ship it. Let it go." Boy, that was encouraging to me and very inspiring. I said, "I'm doing all right you know."

In the meantime, I continued this practice, all the time, late at night until I got to the place until they began to notice that way. When I'd sit down, I learned that I could make out the bill of lading and learn the touch system. Cap looked and said, "Look here. How are you doing this?" Well, I was honest. I came out and told him.

Captain Knapp: That you had been practicing.

Sergeant Robinson: That I had been practicing. I told him that I bought me a typewriter, that he was interested in helping me. Everybody here was interested in helping me. Why couldn't I help myself? He said, "Well that's good. We're behind you."

I improved, improved, improved on that until I became schooled so well on the job, he thought, that LaFlore, who was the chief man, the clerk, was going to take a vacation.

Captain Knapp: And you were still a private soldier at the time.

Sergeant Robinson: Still a private soldier. No, a PFC.

Captain Knapp: PFC.

Sergeant Robinson: PFC. This man went on vacation, and I took his place. The man in charge was well pleased with my work. In the meantime, the man in charge himself, eventually, he wanted to go on leave. In the meantime, something happened with the chief clerk that left me there all alone. Mr. Williams said, "What are we going to do?" Captain Bly said, "Robinson will take care of it." He said, "Yes, all right then."

So, I was there alone, with the exception of the truckdriver. I had made out all the invoices and everything, made out the shipments and all of that for about almost four days—just alone—taking the chief's job.

Captain Knapp: How long had you been there?

Sergeant Robinson: Let me see . . . I guess practically a year.

Captain Knapp: So, you had a chance to learn the job.

Sergeant Robinson: Yes, I was learning it. Otherwise, I applied myself. That's all I thought about was that these people were helping me and I am going to try to learn this.

Captain Knapp: And you didn't have to work in the stables.

Sergeant Robinson: No, I never did go back to the stables again. I held the job down, and the chief warrant officer, Cleveland Williams, he was in charge of the Book Department, commended me. He commended me for the work that I had done, and he told Captain Bly after Cap came back what a wonderful job I had done and "we don't want to lose Rob." They trained me for that job. When the war broke . . . no, no, not when the war broke out, but when things were going on in Europe, Hitler was marching into Czechoslovakia, things began to move here.

Captain Knapp: Going toward war.

Sergeant Robinson: Yeah, that's when the 10th Cavalry, what was that '40 . . . ?

Mr. Hollowell: Uh huh, '40.

Sergeant Robinson: They began to get shook up.

Captain Knapp: They brought the squadrons back together out at Fort Riley, or Camp Funston as they called it.

Sergeant Robinson: Well no, not at that time, was it? Speaking of the 10th Cavalry proper here.

Captain Knapp: Ah, the squadron here.

Sergeant Robinson: Yeah, they became, you know, getting

together. They talked about moving and all like that.

Captain Knapp: Start doing more military training and less service business.

Sergeant Robinson: Well, yes. Then, they moved in other companies. I think C Company came in here at that time, didn't they?

Mr. Hollowell: Yes.

Sergeant Robinson: As I said, I'd been trained for the job up at the Book Department. When they began to consider the chance that the 10th Cavalry was going to leave, the same man that I talked to about getting into the service, Sergeant Carter, regimental sergeant major, sent for me. I went to him and he said, "Rob, do you stay here or go with the 10th Cavalry?"

In the meantime, I had met a wonderful girl here that I contemplated marriage.

Captain Knapp: A woman enters the scene.

Sergeant Robinson: A woman. She was here, and she had talked of marriage. I said, "I'd just as soon stay here." I had never been anywhere else, so I didn't know the disadvantage or the advantage of going. In the meantime, he said, "Well, it's left up to you." He said that Mr. Williams had called [and that] he had inside information about the 10th Cavalry getting ready to leave. He said, "He [Williams] would like for you to stay, but it's left up to you." I said, "I would like to stay here in the detachment." Mr. Williams, in the meantime, had asked me if I wanted to stay. He told me the same thing—that it was left up to me. I told him that I would like to stay here. He said, "That suits me well." So, I transferred from the 10th Cavalry into the detachment, and the 10th Cavalry left me here.

Captain Knapp: The Service Detachment it was called.

Sergeant Robinson: The Service Detachment, that's right. After the 10th Cavalry left, I was here and I could see, after they were gone a certain length of time, the fellows coming back and I was a PFC; I could see the guys coming back with chevrons on.

Captain Knapp: Gotten promoted.

Sergeant Robinson: Yeah, fellows that I was in long before they were. They were sergeants and corporals and things that way. That's what I said about the advantages of staying and the disadvantages of staying and the advantages of going.

Captain Knapp: So, once the 10th Cavalry reassembled out there at Fort Riley, the promotions came back to being like normal.

Sergeant Robinson: Yeah, they began to rise.

Captain Knapp [to Mr. Brown]: Except for you. You were out of the Army by then.

Mr. Brown: I was out of the Army, but I knew about things going to happen because the majors told me.

Captain Knapp: Officers talking about war coming on?

Mr. Brown: They talked about the war, and they talked about changing from horses to tanks. I said, "I'll be a tank man. I'll get in that tank, and I'll run it." But it wasn't happening fast enough.

Captain Knapp: Are you talking about the students, or are you talking about the officers in your own squadron?

Mr. Brown: No, the officers that I'm talking about was majors and things that wasn't even in the 10th Cavalry.

Captain Knapp: Students in the college.

Mr. Brown: The ones that I worked for. Yeah, they were students. They told me, well they brought in the 1st Cavalry on tanks and things, and the majors started telling me that the 10th Cavalry would eventually go to tanks, for the horses were going out of style.

Captain Knapp: But, in fact, the 10th Cavalry didn't go to tanks right away, did they, Sergeant Brown?

Sergeant Brown: No.

Captain Knapp: You stayed with the regiment all the way through its deployment out to Camp Funston, and you were with the regiment through the maneuvers and getting ready to go to Europe. Tell about what happened then.

Sergeant Brown: Yes, it was in '41 when we went on maneuvers all down through Louisiana and Texas. Horses were the great thing in that maneuver.

Captain Knapp: Horses?

Sergeant Brown: Horses were in that maneuver. They could go sometimes where tanks couldn't go.

Captain Knapp: You were a remount sergeant then, isn't that right?

Sergeant Brown: Yes, I was a remount sergeant when we first went down there. When they first went down there, we had to train all these horses and everything for these recruits . . . and have horses for these recruits. We had to train them.

Captain Knapp: Train the horses.

Sergeant Brown: Train the horses just like we did the recruits. They had eight weeks of training; horses had eight weeks of training.

Captain Knapp: Tell us about that.

Sergeant Brown: Just like a recruit, we'd get the horses, and I had a squad of, I think it was about twelve, thirteen men. We'd all get out there and drill horses just like you would drill a soldier. It was mounted drill, mounted drill on the horses. We got them where we could get them from wanting to buck and raise Cain.

Captain Knapp: These are horses that have been procured and broken. . . .

Sergeant Brown: They'd been broken. The cowboys broke them up there in Fort Robinson, Nebraska. They'd just get on a horse, saddle him up, get out there, and as soon as he'd stop bucking, they'd turn him over into a lot and call him broken. Well, he was saddle broke for the time being, but when the Army got him, he'd been out there in that pasture for three or four years and ain't been never rode since but five minutes.

Captain Knapp: So, you really had to start all over again with a lot of them.

Sergeant Brown: Had to start over again with a lot of them.

Captain Knapp: But the horses learned like the men learned.

Sergeant Brown: They learned. You could say, "Left turn, ho," and he'd turn left. "Right turn, ho," "walk," "trot"; he'd just pick up whatever command you'd give.

Mr. Hollowell: However, the only difference is those horses, though, were being trained for military operations rather than for post activities when they were here for the polo . . . that sort of thing. They were being trained to perform combat missions in case they were needed in the Second World War. That's the thing.

Captain Knapp: I suspect that when you got out to Camp Funston . . . you were still with the regiment then, weren't you?

Mr. Hollowell: No, I'd gone to . . . well, I was with them for a short time.

Captain Knapp: For a short time because you're in the [year] book.

Mr. Hollowell: That's right, but I went to school in '42, to the bandleaders' school in January '42.

Captain Knapp: When the regiment got out to Camp Funston and you had all the squadrons together and you were back doing the kinds of things that soldiers enlisted to do, was there an improvement in morale? How did the men feel about being able to soldier again?

Sergeant Brown: Mostly, it was young soldiers. It was practically all new recruits and everything, so they started doing regular duties as a soldier—guard duty and one thing and another.

Captain Knapp: So, there were some parts about it that you didn't care much for.

Sergeant Brown: Well, as long as we were doing something . . . we had our own horse to take care of. They were getting you ready for wartime. [A] lot of times, the colonel would come down there at night—it would be raining and carrying on—in his car. We had to stop him and tell him to dismount and be recognized. He'd say, "I'm Colonel So-and-So."

[General laughter from all]

"I don't care who you are. Dismount. Put your things down and back away from it."

Captain Knapp: ID card.

Sergeant Brown: ID card. It's raining, see. They were just trying us out to see what we would do. A lot of them would say they were Colonel So-and-So-and-So. Well, I ain't going to put the colonel out there, make him get out there too—the general, make him get out there. After they seen how everyone was going . . . I liked it.

Captain Knapp: You liked being a soldier.

Sergeant Brown: Yeah, I loved it.

Captain Knapp: You stayed with the regiment until it actually ended up on the east coast somewhere, didn't it?

Sergeant Brown: After they broke up, some started going here and there . . . California; Camp Clark, Texas; wasn't it?



10th Cavalry Yearbook, 1941, photos

Remount training at Camp Funston, 1940—41